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New Testament Parallels in Buddhistic Literature

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NEW TESTAMENT PARALLELS IN BUDDHISTIC LITERATURE

I

For the intellectual life of our times Buddhism has become an important factor. Since the year 1891 three international societies for the propagation of Buddhism in India and the West have been formed in Calcutta, Rangoon, and Tokyo; also, provincial societies in Colombo, Burma, and San Francisco.

A Buddhist catechism in the English language, by Henry E. Olcott, has been published in its thirty-fifth edition, and translated into more than twenty languages. Not only in England, whose interest in Buddhism can readily be understood, but even in Germany enthusiastic advocates of this religion, which they call "The Religion of the Future," are on the increase. In Der Buddhist, a monthly magazine on Buddhism, published since April, 1905, by the Buddhist publishing firm at Leipsic and edited by Karl R. Seidenstücker with the assistance of Buddhist monks, priests, and

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laymen, we read in the preface: "The appearance of a Buddhist magazine in Europe, especially in Germany, is made desirable by the continual increase of those who, directly or indirectly, must be designated as adherents of Buddhism. More than this, the production of a central organ for these circles has become an urgent necessity."

Under the auspices of the "Buddhist Missionary Society in Germany," with its headquarters at Leipsic, founded August 15, 1903, twenty-two public lectures were delivered at Leipsic during the winter of 1903-1904, in the interest of Buddhism, besides the publication of small Buddhist writings.

In the first number of The Buddhist we read: "We stand at the beginning of a powerful religious movement, and the next decades have unexpected surprises in store for the West in that direction." The official numbers also of the so-called Vedanta Philosophe, edited by E. A. Kernwart, endeavor to make propaganda for this conception of the world and life. The novel In the Shadow of Death obtained the prize for its description of the belief in regeneration in a Buddhist sense.

How is this fancy for Buddhism in our day to be explained? It is not merely a whim of certain circles, a spiritual sport, a mere accident. On the one hand, Buddhism is met by a pessimistic conception of life, which finds in it a confirmation and often a thrilling expression for its disposition and conception of the world. On the other hand, an opposition to an incoherent, a materialistic, worldly view which does not satisfy the internal life and a deeper want which does not find in Christianity the solution of the world riddles of life, but has a theosophico-world bent, leads directly toward Buddhism.

One may show how the movement originated in Germany, and how it was advanced by the aid of literature. First of all by Schopenhauer, who, while a young man at Weimar, was led by the so-called "Kunst-Meyer" to the study of Hindu literature, and from it obtained that pessimism which characterizes his philosophy of the The World as Will and Idea. Then by Edward von Hartmann, who, in his Philosophy of the Unconscious, considered the cessation of consciousness and destruction of the human race as

most desirable. Also, by Frederick Nietzsche, who knows no guilt, but only folly. To these may be added the newest so-called Seekers of God and All-seers in Friedrichshagen, on the Mueggel-lake, near Berlin —the brothers Hart, Wilhelm Böschle and Brune Wille, who, secluded from the world, and yet not too far from the imperial city, seek to lose themselves by a mystic absorption into the universe. All these, as has justly been said, have tasted more or less of the sweet poison, and like any Asiatic have eagerly grasped at the Buddhist opium pipe.

When one considers that Schopenhauer is read especially by the academically educated young people, not in his large philosophical works but in the minor, easy, witty Parerga und Paralipomena; that Edward von Hartmann's Philosophy of the Unconscious is published in stereotyped editions; that the Friedrichshagen colony works through novels and poems, one can easily see that the spread of Buddhist teachings among many finds a well-prepared soil.

True, these currents move within certain circles, one might almost say within certain

conditions and periods of life, which fact makes them interesting and fashionable for many. But, with the journalism of our day it cannot be otherwise than similar to the case created by the lectures on "Babel and Bible" by Delitzsch. The movement will influence large circles. On the other hand, many who praise Buddhism have no clear perception of it. They are enthusiastic about ancient Hindu philosophy and poetry, with its wistful speculations and dreaming monotony, and call this Buddhism without knowing its origin, and without distinguishing it from present-day Buddhism. They find surprising similarities between Buddhism and Christianity, and do not perceive that these similarities are only apparent and fallacious. They praise the noble morality of Buddhism and do not consider the effects which these ethical views would have upon our national life should they obtain authority.

But serious science has also become interested in Buddhism. Since Sanscrit scholars more than a century ago opened the treasures of ancient Indian poetry and wisdom, the sacred writings of the Buddhists have

been translated more and more into the languages of Europe. The life of Buddha, his teaching, and the history of Buddhism have been scientifically investigated. Although the time of composition of many Buddhist writings is still uncertain, their totality, concerning which there is always something new, forms a part of the literature of India.

The recently opened sources have aided much in the study of the science of comparative religions, which is so eagerly cultivated in our day. The great law of evolution in natural science is applied to the religious events of the world's history. According to this law, even in history nothing appears without mediation. Science, by eliminating, from this standpoint, every immediate interference of God and every revelation, can conceive and represent historically only that which happened. The origin of Christianity is explained from the coöperation of Greek, Jewish, and Oriental intellectual forces and conditions. With great learning relations and influences are everywhere demonstrated.

The influence of Babylonian culture upon the ideas of Israel, and thus upon the sacred writings of the Old Testament, was acknowl-

engaged in scientific circles long before the "Babel and Bible" controversy. But it was the exaggeration, the form of its assertion, and the erroneous consequences inferred therefrom which excited the mind. Through a quiet scientific discussion the facts are being elucidated, though at some points there is still a difference of opinion which may last for a long time. More important, however, is the question concerning the relation of Christianity to Buddhism; especially of the possible dependence of the Gospels upon Buddhist sources. It is true that the assertion of Buddhist influences upon Christianity is by no means new. Rationalism had already made the suggestion that Jesus acquired his wisdom and knowledge during a lengthy abode in Egypt and India; a suggestion which quite recently supplied the material for a French hagiologist to compose, under the name of Pierre Leroux, a novel which he entitled Jesus, in which a Buddhist, a venerable man who had come to Nazareth for the study of religions, having perceived the magnetic power of the boy Jesus, which he displayed in an accidental helping, took him to Egypt and made

him acquainted with the mysteries of Buddhism.

In a scientific manner Rudolf Seydel, professor of philosophy at Leipsic, was the first who endeavored to prove Buddhist influences, though not upon Christ, yet upon the origin of the New Testament Gospels and the Revelation of John, in his work Das Evangelium Jesu in Seinem Verhältniss zur Buddha sage, etc., Leipsic, 1882, which was followed by a lecture on "Buddha and Christ," 1883, and in 1884 by Die Buddhalegende und das Leben Jesu nach den Evangelien (second edition published by the son in 1897). He imagined himself to have found in Buddhist writings a great many narratives which served as models for the evangelistic accounts of the life of Jesus. To make this fancy acceptable, he advanced the hypothesis that the evangelists, especially Saint Luke, perused for the Infancy story a poetic apocalyptic gospel, now lost, for which a biography of Buddha was used as a pattern. This Buddhizing Christian gospel followed the Buddha legend closely, except that it passed over everything specifically Indian, everything which was too sen-

sual and colored, sexual, corrupting, and supplying as far as possible Old Testament reminiscences in the proper places. In a Christian sense it consecrated, deepened, and spiritualized the Buddhist borrowings. Besides the collection of sayings of proto-Matthew and the stories of proto-Mark, Seydel imagines that the three synoptists had before them this Buddhistically colored, poetic-apocalyptic type of Jesus. He assumes that it was one of the "many" sources which Luke 1. 1 mentions. Seydel tried to prove this by referring to no less than fifty-one pieces, taken from the evangelistic history as well as from the teachings of Jesus, in which he thought to show analogies and borrowings.

The possibility that, inversely, the Christian Gospels could have influenced the Buddhist legend Seydel rejected, asserting the earlier origin of the Buddhist original writings in question, especially of Lalita-Vistara, the main source of the legendary biography of Buddha. He pointed to the fact that the original text, now lost, was translated into Chinese in A. D. 67, and is now extant in an enlarged form, which enlarge-

ment probably originated in the first Christian century; and he emphasized the early pre-Christian formation of an idolatrously worshiped Buddhist canon, which precludes a Christian influence. Though the time of composition of the Buddhist writings in question has not yet been fixed with certainty, so that the chronological table added to the second edition of The Buddha Legend and the Life of Jesus by M. Seydel is only to serve as a help to the reader and not as a record of certain events, it is admitted as very probable that the respective Buddhist writings were composed before the Gospels.

There is no doubt that since the campaign of Xerxes and Alexander the Great an intercourse existed between the Far East and Asia Minor.[1] But this influence must not be overrated. Such a prominent scholar as Max Müller writes in 1883, with reference to the present question: "That surprising agreements are extant between Buddhism and Christianity cannot be denied. It must also be admitted that Buddhism existed at least four hundred years before Christian-

[1] See the opinion of Professor Rhys Davids on this entire subject in Incarnation and Recent Criticism, p. 97. Eaton & Mains.

ity; I even go further, and should be thankful in the highest degree if someone could show me the historical channels through which Buddhism had influenced ancient Christianity. All my life I have sought for these channels, but thus far I have found none." Later (1896), the same scholar has, indeed, mentioned not only a number of analogies between these religions, like confession, fasting, celibacy of the priests, rosary, which, however, belong not to biblical Christianity but to a later development. He also referred to Old and New Testament stories which can be traced back to Buddhist sources, but the proof of this he does not give. His reference to the Buddhist missionaries who went out into the world in the third century before Christ is met by the fact that, in spite of its missionaries, Buddhism was very little known in the Christian circles of Asia Minor, Egypt, or even of the West during the first two Christian centuries. Clement of Alexandria, who died about A. D. 211, is the first to mention Buddha by name, and he speaks of his commandments, his deification, and the worship of his bones.

Seydel's statements caused much com
ment, while some took exceptior. to som
points and objected to his hypothesis; but
on the whole, they acknowledged at leas
the possibility of Buddhistic influence upo
Christianity and the composition of the Gos
pels, yea, some partly went beyond Seydel'
moderate assertions.

That which science acknowledged as pos
sible was taken for granted by others an
made the most of in a literary way. Si
years after the appearance of Seydel's firs
work Friedrich Zimmermann, under the fic
titious name of a Bhikchu monk, Subhadra
wrote in his Buddhist catechism: "It is ver
probable that Jesus of Nazareth, whos
teachings agree so much with those of Bud
dhism, from his twelfth to his thirtieth yea
during which time the Gospels know nothin
of him, was a disciple of Buddhist monks
and under their guidance obtained perfec
tion. He then returned to his native cou
try to proclaim to his people the redeemin
doctrine. This teaching of Jesus was afte
ward mutilated and mixed with errors fro
the law book of the Jews. The principa
teachings of Christianity, however, as we

as the whole work of the founder, are certainly of Buddhist origin; and the kind Nazarene, whom every Buddhist will also reverence, was an Araha, who had obtained the Nirvana. Now the time is again ripe in Europe, when the Western descendants of the Aryans can hear and know the pure, unadulterated teaching of Buddha. This will be the Religion of the Future in Europe."

What Subhadra considered as probable, Nicolas Notovitsch meant to prove historically. In Thibet, the country of Lamaism, he claimed to have found an ancient document in a Buddhist monastery, whose contents he published in his La Vie inconnue de Jesus Christ (A Gap in the Life of Jesus), Paris, 1894. In this document we are told that Jesus when fourteen years of age had fled to India, where the Brahmans taught him to read the Vedas, to cure by means of prayer, and to drive out evil spirits. After six years he was obliged to leave that territory because he had taken care of slaves. He then came into the territory of Buddha, studied his teachings and preached what he considered the highest perfection. From India he went to Persia, and when twenty-

nine years old he returned again to Palestine. He went about as a preacher, was accused before Pilate as dangerous, but though protected by the Pharisees, his friends, he was, nevertheless, tortured and executed. On the third day his grave was found empty, and the rumor had spread that the great Judge had sent his angel to remove to the heights the mortal frame of the Holy, in whom a part of the Divine Spirit dwelt on earth. The book was proved to be a fraud.

Such literary misuse has not deterred science from reëxamining the supposed parallels between the Gospels and the Buddhist traditions. English, French, German, and Dutch scholars took up the work. This was especially done by H. S. Stix, in Christ or Buddha? Leipsic, 1900; also, by Otto Pfleiderer in a lecture delivered before the International Congress of Religions at Amsterdam, September, 1903; and by D. G. A. Van den Bergh, of Eysinga, in his Indische Enflüsse auf evangelische Erzuhlungen (in the Forschungen, edited by Bousset and Gunkel, fourth part). Both Pfleiderer and Van den Bergh admit Buddhist influences upon the evangelic narratives, the

former to a larger, the latter to a lesser, extent. Though the measure of influences is, according to both, less than has formerly been asserted, for example, by Seydel, this small influence becomes still less from the fact that the one considers as doubtful what the other accepts as probable; and such an expert in this field as Hermann Oldenberg, in a review of Van den Bergh's book (Theol. Literaturzeitung, 1905, No. 3), expressed some further doubts even on those points on which both are agreed. At any rate, the question has been treated in these two newest writings with such learning and impartiality that their results form a safe basis for further inquiry.

In examining the question there is one difficulty, namely, that there is scarcely a scholar who is at home alike in both departments, the Buddhist literature and New Testament theology. But Seydel (1882, p. 5) has rightly pointed out the danger that, in the present specialization of sciences, comprehensive and comparative works are in danger of being entirely left undone, unless those undertake them who are not specialists; and Oldenberg (Theol. Literaturzeit-

ung, 1905, No. 3), in the case of the borrowing problems, wishes to leave the decision to the specialists in religion, as to which religion would be the borrowing one, since it must be determined whether the questionable phenomenon can be sufficiently explained without borrowing, or whether the thought and form of these phenomena give weight to the opinion that foreign elements were admixed.

When Seydel laid it down as a critical axiom, "Agreement awakens the thought of borrowing when the common trail seems inexplicable on one of two sides, while it seems entirely proper on the other," and, "Seemingly accidental agreement of unimportant events and its frequent occurrence have great importance for the question of borrowing," Van den Bergh, while acknowledging these principles, nevertheless, points out that many of the formerly alleged parallels fail as arguments, because they can be explained either from the identity of circumstances under which they mutually originated, or from the same phase of religious development of Christianity and Buddhism; yea, sometimes even from ordinary human reasons, so that

without doubt many agreements in the life of Jesus and Buddha can be ascribed to the like spiritual sphere in which both appeared.

Van den Bergh is surprised at the agreement of the following New Testament narratives with Indian legends: Simeon in the temple, the boy Jesus at the age of twelve, the baptism of Jesus, the temptation, the beatitude of the mother of Jesus, the widow's mite, the walking on the sea, the Samaritan woman at the well, and the universal conflagration. Doubtful, however, seems to him the agreement or similarity in these narratives: the annunciation, the choice of the disciples, Nathanael, the prodigal son, the man born blind, and the transfiguration.

Pfleiderer arranges differently by putting the Christ-picture of the primitive faith in religio-historical illustration, as his plan requires, and, accordingly, considers Christ as the Son of God, as Conqueror of Satan, as Miracle-Saviour, as Conqueror over Death, and Life Mediator, and as King of Kings. Besides other like heathenish notions, he quotes the Buddhist parallels, and shows how much they have influenced the formation of the Christ-picture.

II

While Buddhist influence upon the formation of the history of the infancy of Jesus might seem more credible, his later life, down to his suffering and death on the cross, offers fewer parallels to the life of Buddha. The history of the infancy, as the Gospel of Mark shows, belonged not to the original evangelical preaching. Saint John's Gospel also does not mention it. In the apostolic epistles it entirely recedes. Thus the tradition for this part of the life of Jesus seems to have been exposed in a larger degree to foreign influences than the time of his public ministry and suffering of which his disciples were witnesses.

The main source for the history of the birth and infancy of Buddha to his first preaching in Benares is the Lalîta-Vistara. Foucaux, who, in the Annales du Musée Guimet, tome vi, Paris, 1834, gave a French translation of the Lalîta-Vistara, translates the words by "developpement des jeux," more accurately "completely described action," "the book of changes." In a Chinese translation it is called "The holy book of the

acts of Buddha." Seydel puts its origin between A. D. 10 and 45. The Chinese translation (A. D. 67) is based upon an "enlarged" form of the book. Whereas the original form closes with the first sermon of Buddha in Benares, the latter adds a few chapters on the end of his life.

In a detailed manner Lalita-Vistara speaks of the preparation in heaven for the birth of Buddha (Foucaux, p. 74 sqq). The family which is to be found worthy that Bodhisattva, the future Buddha, should belong to, must have sixty-four distinguishing features, and the woman who is to bear him must have thirty-two more in addition, all of which are mentioned. Before Bodhisattva leaves heaven, he assembles the hundred thousand gods and sons of gods who bow before him in adoration, and whom he instructs concerning the one hundred and eight shining gates of the law. The sons of the gods ask him not to leave heaven, which would lose its splendor after his departure; but he takes the tiara from his head and puts it on Maitrêya, his successor, who after him is to be Buddha. In the meantime Queen Maya, surrounded by all splendor and

riches, flowers and birds, adorned with the most beautiful festive dresses and jewels, prepared herself by fasting to give birth to Buddha. According to one tradition, a ray of light entered into the body of Maya; according to another, a small white elephant. To her husband, King Suddhodana, the event is announced by spirits flying in the air saying: "Girded with righteousness and tender mercy, adored on earth and in the splendid heaven, the coming Buddha leaves the glorious spheres and comes down to earth to be born of sweet Maya." When, after ten months, the hour comes for Maya she asks the king for permission to go to the pleasure garden Loumbini in Kapilavastu. The king orders twenty thousand elephants adorned with gold and pearls, twenty thousand horses, white as snow and silver, and twenty thousand warriors to accompany her. One hundred thousand bells ring when she alone ascends the most beautiful traveling carriage. Sixty thousand women, protected by forty thousand men of their tribe, go before her. Arrived at the garden Loumbini, she seats herself under the most beautiful of all trees, whose branches bow in salutation.

In that moment Buddha leaves her bosom by the right side. The deities of the four regions of the heavens receive him; several hundred thousand deities bathe him; he, however, sitting on a big lotus, looks around toward the ten points of the universe with the look of a lion, with the look of a big man, and with a loud voice proclaims his preëminence over all gods, and the coming redemption. Five days after the birth the Brahmans of the city meet and, in accordance with a supernatural command, the boy is called "Siddharta," that is, "He who is successful in all things." On the seventh day after his birth his mother dies, and her sister, a concubine of the king, acts as his mother.

The discrepancy between the history of the birth of Buddha and Jesus is great. Stix, indeed, calls attention to the fact, that here as well as there, the birth of a child conceived by a holy spirit is announced by angels, and that Jesus, like Buddha, belongs to a royal house; but Seydel begins his chapter "Bethlehem" with the sentence, "We must not only point out parallels, but also contrasts," yet he remarks that the birthplace of Buddha, Kapilavastu, at the council held in

the Tushîta-heaven concerning the place of the birth, was praised because built, in remembrance of the penitent Kapila, as "the great city of the beings which planted the roots of salvation." Van den Bergh will not explain on the ground of borrowing the similarity of an announcement of the birth of Jesus to Mary (Luke 1. 29-33) and the interpretation of a dream of the mother of Buddha as referring to the birth of a wonderful child; but he quotes, though only as a single, concrete expression, which might excite the thought of a borrowing, that in the Thibetan redaction of Lalîta-Vistara, the remark of the Brahmans, "Here is no misfortune for the family," answers to the biblical words of the angel to Mary, "Fear not, Mary," yet he would not ascribe any importance to such a coincidence.

But special importance is attached to the agreement of the history of Simeon in the temple with the visit of Asîta in the royal palace (Lalîta-Vistara, by Foucaux, pp. 91-101). Asîta, an ascetic, who had obtained the eight magic qualifications which enabled him to visit the heavens, learns there that in the world a mighty Buddha has been born.

Surveying the world with his divine eye, he fixes his gaze upon the kingdom of India, and, in the great city of Kapilavastu, he beholds, in the palace of King Suddhodana, the child in the light of the bright splendor of pure deeds, and worshiped by all the world, while a host of heavenly spirits sings the praise of Buddha. By means of his power he comes down to Kapilavastu. Having arrived in the royal palace, he says: "Rajah, a son is born unto thee. I wish to see him." The prince, richly dressed, was brought by the order of the king to do honor to the Brahman; he, however, rose from the throne on which he sat and with hands folded over his head he bowed before the chosen Buddha. The king likewise bowed before his son. Asîta quotes thirty-two bodily signs and eighty-four signs of a secondary kind, which characterize the boy as the future great man. Suddenly the ascetic began to cry. The king's people ask, surprised: "Does some misfortune hang over the child of our ruler?" He answered: "Over him hangs no misfortune; he is destined to become the Buddha." "But why dost thou weep?" "Because I am old and frail, and

shall not live to see the glory of his Buddhastys; therefore, I weep." Stix says: "The similarity of the narratives is simply bewildering." But the diversity consists not only in the local coloring of India and Israel, but also in the modes of thought of Asîta, who weeps because he shall not live to see the reign of Buddha, and of Simeon, who thanks God that his eyes have seen the Saviour. What is more natural than that the old time and the new meet in an old man, and be represented in the newly born child? What more human than that the old man should take the child in his arms? Of Van den Bergh's distrust of the biblical narrative, which without positive Old Testament command has the child Jesus brought to the temple in order to thus bring about the meeting with Simeon, O. Wenberg says (Theol. Literaturzeitung, 1905, No. 3) that he makes the poetry of the old narrative subordinate to the prose of little faith.

Stix quotes a parallel to the infanticide at Bethlehem, but only according to the late Abhinishkramana-Sutra, which Beal translated from a Chinese version of the sixth century after Christ, under the title of The

Romantic Legend of Sâkya Buddha. King Bimbisara is informed of the birth of a boy of whom the Brahmans predicted that he would either be a mighty ruler or a Buddha. Being advised to send an army to destroy the child, Bimbisara rejoins: "Do not speak thus; if the child shall be a Chakravati Raja [mighty ruler], he will wield a righteous scepter and we must obey him; but, in case he becomes the powerful Buddha, whose love and mercy may redeem all men, we must become his disciples." Herod and Bimbisara bear little likeness to one another. Seydel also says (p. 143): "Real parallels to the infanticide at Bethlehem we do not find in Buddhism."

As the history of the infancy of Jesus also includes the account of Jesus when twelve years old among the scribes in the temple, it is also reported of Buddha that he was more learned than his teacher. Lalîta-Vistara narrates (Foucaux, pp. 106-109): Sixty thousand young girls, born in the same night with Buddha, were given him for company and service. The elders of the Sâkya family declared that it was necessary that the young prince be brought to the temple of the gods.

The king desired that all streets of the city through which the chariot was to pass should be decorated. All that were getting ill-luck —the lame, hunchback, deaf, blind, dumb, deformed—were removed. The Brahmans were to pray; all bells were to toll. When the young prince was dressed he asked his foster mother, Maha Pradjâpati Gautamisma, without quivering his eyelids, in the kindest manner: "Mother, whither are they going to take me?" She replied: "To the temple of god, my son." The young prince smiled and said: "When I was born the three thousand worlds were shaken, and the high gods bowed their heads to my feet. Which other god is greater than I, that thou bringest me to him? I am god over all gods; no god is like unto me; how shall there be one over me? But to accommodate myself to the custom of the work, I will go, O mother. When they shall see my supernatural change, the transported multitude will surround me with honors; gods and men will unite and say, 'He is god through himself.'" Bodhisattva had hardly entered the temple when the images of the gods Civa, Skanda, Brahma, and the other gods, rose

from their places and fell down at his feet, and gods and people to the number of one hundred thousand, filled the city with the cry of admiration and joy. Flowers rained from heaven, one hundred thousand musical instruments were heard without being troubled, and all gods praised Buddha.

Lalita-Vistara also speaks of the wisdom of the child (pp. 113-117). Surrounded by ten thousand infants, accompanied by ten thousand carts filled with victuals, gold, and silver, at the sound of eight hundred thousand musical instruments, under a shower of flowers, in company of eight thousand daughters of the gods as lookers-on, Bodhisattva enters the writing hall. The teacher cannot bear the splendor and the majesty and falls down before him. Bodhisattva asks the teacher which of the twenty-four alphabets, which he mentions by name, he is to teach him. When the many thousand children who had come with him were to learn the letters, they are perfectly able to do so by means of the blessing of the presence of Buddha, who had only gone to the school for that purpose, and used the oppor-

tunity to propound at each letter one of the holy teachings of his law.

Once also Bodhisattva was missed. According to the introduction to the Ishatakkasi, which comprise the tales of his forms of existence before his earthly birth, his disappearance happened on a festival, at the annual plowing of the king with a golden plow. Lalita-Vistara narrates (pp. 118-123): One day the young prince went with sons of the counselors of his father to visit a farmers' village. Having seen the work, he sat alone with crossed legs under a tree. The king missed him, sought him, and found him absorbed in thought in the shadow of the tree, surrounded by five saints, shining from the light of his majesty like the moon in the midst of the stars. And he said to his father: "Let alone the plowing, my father, and seek higher things. If you need money, I will let it rain down; clothes, I give them to thee; and whatever else you need I will let it rain down." He then returns, but in his mind he planned to leave the paternal home.

It is obvious that there are analogies between the history of the birth and infancy of

Buddha and Jesus, but they have their origin not in borrowing, which has thus far not been proven in literature from any of the biblical histories adduced above, but in the agreement of Buddhist and Christian belief in the supernatural birth of a Holy Child. Faith could not imagine this to have occurred otherwise than by being surrounded by extraordinary events and heavenly phenomena, and hence they are found here as well as there, partly agreeing, partly differing, conditioned by the similarity in the world of conception and by the diversity in popular manner of representation. Pfleiderer, therefore, rightly discards entirely the small similarities in the narratives, over against which stand a much larger number of dissimilarities, which are not mentioned, and only emphasizes the great common thought of both religions: the belief in the supernatural birth of both founders and belief in the incarnation of Divinity. The notion of sons of gods is certainly largely diffused in heathenism; we also find striking parallels in heathenish legends to the virgin birth; but by that the generally human belief in the revelation of God in the human

world is only attested. The assumption that the belief in the virgin birth of Jesus was taken from heathenish ideas at a time when the Gospels of Matthew and Luke originated is opposed, as Harnack also admits, by the entire and oldest tradition of Christendom. Pfleiderer, however, finds also an agreement in this: that, according to the Buddha legend, the standing designation for the heavenly essence of Buddha, presupposed for the separate incarnations, is "man, noble man, great man, victorious lord," just as, according to the Jewish apocalyptic notion, the preëxistent Messiah is called "Son of man," or "man," "second man from heaven" by Paul; "Son of man" in the Gospels. The Gnostic doctrine of the different incarnations of the heavenly spirits in Adam, the patriarchs and Jesus has also such a striking relationship with the Indian doctrine that a direct connection can hardly be doubted. But just here the Buddhist and Christian ideas separate. According to the latter God becomes man in Christ; according to the former Buddha is from his very birth a man—though a perfect one—but no divine being; at any rate, not God in the highest

sense of the word, for which Buddhism in general has no room. Thus, instead of a similarity we get an essential diversity, which is covered only by small, seeming, external similarities.

A second group of parallels Pfleiderer comprises under the head of "Christ as Conqueror of Satan." The baptism of Jesus as the consecration for his prophetical office and struggle could here also find a place according to Van den Bergh, who sees in it some reminiscence of Buddhist tradition, not, indeed, according to the biblical description, but according to that of the apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews. According to this the members of the family of Jesus advise him to be baptized, whereas he considers this as unnecessary. This trait in the Gospel of the Hebrews Van den Bergh considers as older, more authentic than the biblical statement, because it makes for a more natural conception of the person of Jesus, a more naïve form of the gospel statement and the behavior of his relatives. It also answers to the visit of Bodhisattva to the temple, mentioned above, in conforming to the usage of the world. As he considered the

walk to the temple unnecessary, so Jesus the walk to the Jordan, and both comply with the wish of the relatives, only the evangelist turned the refusal of Jesus into a refusal of John the Baptist. But there is little similarity between the proud question of Bodhisattva and the humble demeanor of Jesus at his baptism, and the original refusal of John the Baptist to baptize Jesus has its cause in his admiration for the purity of Jesus.

The parallel to the temptation of Jesus seems to be better grounded and, possibly, shows a borrowing. Lalita-Vistara (pp. 257-286) narrates: Mara, the evil one, saw in a dream thirty-six terrible faces, which threatened him and his kingdom. He calls his army against the man who sits under the tree. The demons advise him to desist from his further struggle; but he gathers around him numberless deformed beings, who with their missiles, trunks of trees and mountains, adorned with garlands of roses consisting of skulls and chopped fingers, should frighten Bodhisattva. But when he shakes his head, like a lotus of a hundred leaves, Mara flees, and the missiles which his

army had darted against him are turned into flowers. But Mara does not give up, and says to his daughters: "Go and win Bodhisattva; see whether he is not susceptible of love." In thirty-two ways, which are described in the most sensual manner, they show him by uncovering and covering the magic power of woman; they apply all arts of seduction, but in vain. The eight deities of the Bodhi-tree praise Bodhisattva and deride Mara. The evil one displays for a third time his powers, but Bodhisattva softly touches the earth with his hand, and before its sound, which is like brass, the tempter departs.

Differently is the history of the temptation given by Little (Buddhism in Christendom): Mara, the evil one, suddenly appears in the air and calls to Buddha: "Lead not the life of a Jogi. In seven days thou shalt be lord of the world." But Buddha strenuously refused; though, through the magic influence of the evil one, he felt a strong desire to visit once again the city of his father, he struggled against this desire, when, by a powerful work of the seducer, the earth suddenly turned like a potter's wheel. The

sad eyes of Buddha now beheld the high towers and brilliant lights of the great city, which in the moonlight lay before him in sleep. The holy man hesitated, yet resisted the tempter and made his way to Vaisali. Here lived a holy man, Arâta Kalama. Buddha said to him: "Arâta Kalama, thou must initiate me how to seek after Brahma." With crossed legs Buddha spent six years, and sought to obtain the visions of the higher Buddhism and the magic powers. Having fasted forty-seven days and nights, without having tasted anything, Mara appeared before him to tempt him a second time. "Sweet creature," said the tempter, "the hour of thy death is at hand; sacrifice, and eat a part thereof to save thy life." Buddha replied: "Death is the unavoidable end of life. Why should I try to avoid death. He that falls in battle is noble. He who is overcome is as good as dead. Demon, I shall soon triumph over thee."

Van den Bergh admits that the similarity in the temptation of Buddha and Jesus does not refer to the promises of Satan, but only to the outer circumstances, as it were, to the frame of the history. But with Seydel, he

calls attention to one word which he considers important. Buddha once said of himself: "Lions and tigers I attracted through the power of friendship. Surrounded by lions, tigers, panthers, bears, and buffaloes, antelopes, gazelles, and boars, I dwelt in the forest," and, according to another record of the temptation of Buddha, the beasts came to do homage to the victor. Now, Matthew closes his detailed statement on the temptation of Jesus with the words: "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." Mark, however, condenses the whole narrative and says: "And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." This phrase, "and was with beasts," Van den Bergh finds so unwarranted by the biblical history that it can only be a reminiscence from the temptation of Buddha. But says Oldenberg (Theol. Literaturzeitung), who corrects the quotation, accurately speaking: "Those words, that he attracted lions, tigers, and other beasts by the magic power of friendship and

lived with them in the forest, according to the Kariga-Pithaka, are not spoken of Buddha, but of a black steer, which represented a previous form of existence of Buddha in the course of metamorphosis. By Mark, the addition, "and he was with wild beasts," is only to be understood as an amplification of the words, "and he was in the wilderness." There the word of Oldenberg applies: "Philological sagacity should not prevent us from taking the simple simply." Seydel finds the fasting strange in the history of the temptation of Jesus, whereas it is natural, unavoidable with Buddha, required by his Brahmanic cult. Therefore it must have been transferred from Buddha to Jesus. But the fasting of Jesus is most naturally connected with his abode in the wilderness, whereas the renunciation and world-contempt of Buddha, even after he recognized the folly of fasting, becomes nauseous; he covers himself with the exhumed rags of a dead beggar.

It is certain that in the temptation—histories of Buddha and Jesus analogies are not wanting. Both are preceded by a glorification: Buddha under the Bodhi-tree, Jesus at the baptism in the Jordan. The tempta-

tion takes place in the desert. Hunger, as the outcome of long fasting, offers to the tempter a point of attack. The devil retires unsuccessful; he waits for a more favorable time. To the victor homage is rendered. Should Bodhisattva become a perfect Buddha, he had to pass through temptation in order to prove it. That Jesus was tempted to make a selfish use of his miraculous powers, to obtain followers by a miracle display, yea, to gain the world by even a seeming homage to the evil one, all this he stated clearly in the history of the temptation which he gave to his disciples. That such a temptation could be experienced after moments of exaltation; that it takes place in solitude; that it comes about when a special peril of attack is offered; that the temptation when passed is followed by a feeling of elevation, victory, and strengthening—all this lies in the nature of the occurrence; so that here also the similarity of some details in the temptations, which greatly differ in other respects, can be explained on other grounds than similar circumstances.

Beatitudes, which form the introduction to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5.

1-10), Buddha also spoke under the Bodhi-tree: "Whoever hears the law, whoever becomes a seer, whoever is pleased in the solitude, is happy." "He who dwelling in the midst of living creatures yet does no evil, he is happy in the world. He who can rise above vice, be free from passions, he is happy in the world. He who has overcome selfishness and pride has obtained the highest happiness" (Rgya 355). Even if one translates for "happy" "blessed," and puts the word at the beginning of the sentence, the like form of the Beatitudes, in spite of some similarities, can by no means deceive us as to the different keynotes and hopes of the Buddhist and the Christian.

In the miracle narratives Seydel sees the similarity not in the miracles themselves but in the attitude of both miracle-workers toward those who ask miracles; yet he admits this difference: that Christianity puts the miracle in the service of moral doing, whereas in Buddhism the miracle is the principal thing. Van den Bergh finds in Buddhist legend only one parallel to the miracles of Jesus; it concerns the walking of Jesus on the sea, who reaches his saving hand to

sinking Peter (Matt. 14. 25-33). Van den Bergh finds so many contradictions in this story that it appears to him to be inaptly wrought together from different sources; whereas the Buddhist story, which speaks of a lay brother who, absorbed in ecstatic meditation on Buddha, goes into the river, in the midst of which, perceiving the water, begins to sink, but by a renewed ecstasy safely comes to the other side, causes Van den Bergh no surprise, since in India the miraculous power is actually associated with the power of faith; so that the "Peter anecdote," "though, of course, not directly," is borrowed, according to him, from a Hindu range of thought. Moreover, the story of that ecstatic lay brother is found in the introduction to one of the Dshâtakas, popular stories which at a later period only received a Buddhist retouch. Concerning the miracle powers of both, Pfleiderer points out that, in the Buddhist legend, as well as in the Gospels, miracles of knowledge play an important part; for Buddha knows not only his own life before his birth but perceives also the thoughts of others. He also refers to some miracles of healing by Buddha, but the

similarity is limited to possession of miraculous power, without agreement of special instances, so that a borrowing is not here asserted.

Seydel assigns as a parallel of the highest order the agreement of the beatification of the mother of Jesus in the woman's exclamation (Luke 11. 27), "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," with the exclamation of a noble virgin who is charmed with Buddha's beauty and majesty:

> The mother is indeed blessed,
> The father is indeed blessed,
> The wife is indeed blessed
> Who has such a husband.

Van den Bergh also regards as so important the agreement of this Buddhist narrative in the Nidânakathâ, a pre-Christian canonical work of the Southern Buddhists, with the biblical passage, in which he misses the right cause for the exclamation of the woman, and in which he finds the reply of Jesus uncalled for: "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it," that he feels justified in assuming here a Hindu influence upon the New Testament

passage. But the temper of the virgin in her castle and the feeling of the woman in the crowd are entirely different.

For the conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan women at the well (John 4), the model is said to be found in a Buddhist narrative. In the Diryâ-vadana (fol. 217 a), by Bournouf, Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme Indien, Paris, 1844, it is said: Ananda, the most familiar disciple of Sakyamuni, after a long journey meets one day a young Tshandala girl, who draws water, and whom he asked for a drink. The girl, fearing to defile him by her touch, calls his attention to the fact that she was born in the race of the Tshandala and that she is not permitted to approach a monk. But Ananda answered: "My sister, I ask thee not as to thy race, nor as to thy family, I ask thee only to give me some water." According to a Chinese redaction of this story, the girl falls in love with Ananda; the mother's witchcraft imperils the disciple, but the master saves him. As the girl continues to persecute the disciple with her love, Buddha himself promises her to act as mediator on condition that she first has her hair cut

off. Then she is converted by Buddha and elevated to the rank of an Arhât, a perfect one.

Van den Bergh finds the Indian story well put together, whereas the corresponding biblical narrative seems to him to consist of various incoherent traditions, and not in conformity to the relation of the Jews with the Samaritans in the time of Jesus. But from the consideration that the Buddhist narrative refers to Ananda and not to Buddha, and that in its further development it has no similarity whatever to the biblical history, the fact that either Ananda or Jesus after a hot journey should ask a little water of a woman or a girl drawing water is something so natural that there is no sufficient reason to doubt the independence of both narratives.

Van den Bergh also calls attention to the similarity in the story of the widow's mite (Mark 12. 41-44; Luke 21. 1-4) with a story in a Chinese translation of the Buddharsharita by Acraghosa, who lived in the first century after Christ. This similarity seems to him important because of the "two mites," since in the Buddhist narrative a

widow is also mentioned who offers "two" pieces of copper, which she found in the dirt. Her petition that her good deed may be rewarded is fulfilled, for on her way home she meets the king of the country, returning from the funeral of his wife, who takes her for his wife. The thought that the poor sometimes offer more than the rich often occurs in Buddhist writings. Thus a poor woman fills the poor-box of Buddha with a handful of flowers, which rich people would not fill with their thousand bushels. But the similarity of both narratives consists only in this: that a poor woman in both instances offers "two" small coins, while it is not yet decided whether the woman of the biblical narrative had more than one coin.

Van den Bergh attaches special importance to the parallel discovered by him between 2 Pet. 3, and a passage in the Nidanakattâ. Both speak of the universal conflagration, the destruction of this world by fire, and both connect the imminent destruction of the world with the admonition to lead a moral life. Some expressions, for example, the address "Beloved" in the Epistle of Peter, and "Friends" in the Buddhist,

and the announcement that the elements "shall melt with fervent heat," read almost alike in both passages. But the expectation of a destruction of the world by fire need not have been transferred from an Indian idea to the New Testament, and the emphasis of the similarity in the address shows how even meaningless reminiscences are hunted up and emphasized.

The striking parallel instanced by Pfleiderer to the narrative of the choice of disciples by Buddha and Jesus, who formerly belonged to other masters, Van den Bergh finds of too little consequence to attract to it the thought of even a remote relation.

The textual change in the history of Nathanael (John 1. 47-51) introduced by Seydel, whereby he made possible the identification of the fig tree under which Nathanael was when Jesus saw him with the Bodhi-tree under which Buddha received the illumination, Van den Bergh explains as very hazardous.

A "prodigal son" (Luke 15. 11-19) is also mentioned in the Saddharma Pundarika-Sutra, the "white lotus of the good law," a Buddhist writing, rich in parables belong-

ing to the second Christian century. Whereas Wuttke (Geschichte des Heidentums, II, p. 522) considers the narrative derived from Christian sources. Foucaux considers it a very important proof of borrowing. Seydel, however, says: "The parable has, indeed, nothing in common with the Christian except that a son who had emigrated returns impoverished." In fact, the tendency of both stories is entirely different. In the Buddhist narrative the returned son does not recognize his father (who in the meantime had become rich), and is made to do menial labor, tend the horses, and feed the swine, and only after probation is made heir, fifty years later, at the death of the father. But the biblical narrative shows the mercy of the father and puts the repentant son over against the self-righteous brother. Nevertheless, Van den Bergh thinks it is not impossible that Indian material has been independently worked up in the Gospel and was applied in illustration of a truly Christian idea.

The narrative of the healing of the man that was born blind (John 9. 1-5), which has a parallel in the "Lotus" and in what

Van den Bergh finds a confusing mixture of two thoughts—the healing of one who was born blind and a healing on the Sabbath—Seydel has explained as of Indian origin on account of the obvious supposition of a preëxistence of the soul, whereas, he sees the kernel of the New Testament narrative, according to John 9. 39-41, in the words of Jesus, which speak of the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees, answering to the main thought of the Buddhist parable in which a blind man is first healed bodily, afterward spiritually. Pfleiderer attaches no importance to the parallelism of these narratives; whereas Van den Bergh assumes belief in the preëxistence of the soul held by Plato and Alexandrianism, also in Israel, without controverting the possibility that in a much earlier time India influenced the doctrine of the metamorphosis taught by Pythagoras, and that his influences over Plato and Alexandrianism could have been asserted in New Testament ideas. But the question of the disciples, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" and the answer of Jesus, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his par-

ents," had by no means the belief in the pre-existence of the soul and the possibility of a sin in this preëxistence for its supposition. Rather than think of metamorphosis or pre-existence of the soul and the possibility of an orthodox Indiaism, one might think that in the womb man could already have sinned as an embryo by evil impressions, an idea which rabbinism has further developed.

The transfiguration on the mountain (Matt. 17. 9), which, according to Van den Bergh, is said to belong to the period after the resurrection and has been anticipated by the evangelist, has also a parallel in the life of Buddha. In the Maha-Parinibbana-Sutra, on two occasions Buddha instructs his disciple Ananda concerning the bright splendor of his complexion, namely on the night when he obtained the highest wisdom, and on the night in which he departed his life; also at the beginning and at the end of his public career; but the similarity, according to Van den Bergh, is limited only to the shining figure of the Lord on the mount shortly before he announced his suffering and death.

Buddhist tradition has also a betrayer.

Buddha had an enemy among his disciples, Devadetta, who belonged to his own kindred. From the vulture-mount, the favorite preaching place of Buddha, he rolls stones down on him; sets a violent elephant at him. Moved by ambition, he is said to have tried to supplant the aged Buddha and to bring the government of the congregation into his own hand. He also demanded a stricter mode of life in order to appear the more pious and obtain followers. Yet, as the Buddhasharita of Asoaghosha, belonging to the first Christian century, narrates, he was cast into the deepest hell. The similarity between Devadetta and Judas is very small.

For the biblical belief in Christ as Conqueror of Death and Life Mediator, for his atoning death, his resurrection, descent into Hades and ascension, which are only meant to be an expression for his "exaltation," for the belief in his salvation-bringing name, for baptism in his name as the bath of regeneration, and for the eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper, Pfleiderer adduces numerous parallels from the Græco-Roman and Oriental history of religions, but none from Buddhism. But for "Christ as King of kings

and Lord of lords," who as the Head of his church is the Saviour, who establishes its salvation, who is its Lawgiver, whose will is the censor of its life, its Judge, who shall recompense everyone according to his works; yea, who is Lord of all the world, he finds corresponding parallels in the extravagant praises of Buddha, especially as they are contained in the twenty-third chapter of the Lalîta-Vistara. Since Buddhism makes the life of the individual, and thus, also, that of its founder, end in Nirvana, Buddha cannot be thought of as an exalted one who continually rules his own with divine power; but according to Pfleiderer, for the practical devotion of his believers, he is the ever-present object of their trusting love. Here, as everywhere, the psychological need of faith, according to human illustration of the eternal, naturally leads to a somehow conceived apotheosis of the historical Saviour.

A parallel to the promise of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit as the Comforter and Advocate, Seydel sees in the later development of the Buddhist legend of the appointment of Maitrêya as Buddha's successor, who, five

thousand years after his Nirvana will let himself down into the bosom of a Maya-deri, and will become a Buddha.

That the Christian religion has in common with the Buddhist the missionary impulse, and that both have it back to their founders, is undeniable, but certainly no proof of borrowing.

Finally, the death of Buddha has nothing in common with that of Jesus; as little as the last supper to which Buddha was invited by a blacksmith, and which is fatal to him through the use of brawn, has to do with the institution of the Holy Supper. A later Buddhist tradition narrates that in order to see the all-powerful Buddha personified in his death, he voluntarily offered his body to a starving tigress to save her and her young ones.

When Stix sees agreements in the precepts of Buddha and Jesus, Van den Bergh rightly points out, on the other hand, that the relationship of the two religions as universal and ethical, may very well explain why some single sayings of a religious, ethical, or philosophical nature may sound alike, without any need of supposing a dependence

of the one on the other for the explanation of such parallels, especially as these often have another meaning though agreeing in form.

III

Though borrowing cannot be proven for any of the New Testament narratives which are said to have their parallels in Buddhism; though alleged similarities seem to have been proven, such as are partly subordinate, partly established in the like religious idea of different nations, it is, nevertheless, conceivable that a brief juxtaposition of the most striking Buddhist and New Testament passages, as by Stix, shows a similarity, and many would think the borrowing probable. In a literary way it has thus far not been proved. Seydel uses for it this figure: "One could break each single rod; more difficult it is with the bundle; but a bundle of bundles?" But this impression must vanish when not only like passages, be it individually, or in bundles, are quoted; but the whole is considered, especially in the description of the Buddhist sources. Within these Buddhist documents those alleged par-

allels occupy a very small space. Lalita-Vistara, which comprises the biography of Buddha until his first public appearance—his preaching at Benares—is ten times as large as the Gospel of Luke, about forty times as large as the history of the infancy and childhood of Jesus until his first preaching in Nazareth narrated in the same Gospel. Especially is the connecting text, which combines the supposedly other poetical portions, considering the preference of the Indian for wild exaggerations, we have such a mass of extravagances and repetitions that the few beautiful or affecting passages are like pearls in the sea. It is hardly credible that a work like Lalita-Vistara should have exercised a power of attraction upon a primitive Christian and through him upon the authors of the synoptic Gospels with their Old Testament disposition, or even upon the author of the Gospel of John, influenced by the Hellenic spirit. Even Van den Bergh does not think it probable that the history of Buddha as a whole had in the earliest Christian time come so far toward the West as to have such an influence; but he thinks it probable that in the first two centuries Indian tradi-

tion may have orally influenced the old Christian gospel statement.

Thus the possibility only remained that some Buddhist narratives entered into the intellectual circle of the evangelists and were adopted by them, just as the apostle Paul received Greek educational elements. But against this must be asserted that it is one thing to quote occasionally in a letter the word of a Greek poet, and another thing knowingly to take parts from the biography of another founder of religion and to incorporate them with the history of the life of Jesus. True it is that the first Christian century was a time of few and lasting religious movements and also of syncretism. Doubtless these are extant for the religio-historical contemplation of points of contact and analogies between Buddhism and Christianity; but these contacts and analogies are only partly apparent, yea, directly fallacious. They are so overbalanced by the diversity of the entire conception of the world that the Christians of the earliest times, if they came at all in contact with Buddhism, must have perceived this diversity, and repudiated the similarity. They

certainly were not deceived by the apparent similarities. In order to do away with the possibility of Christian influence on Buddhist sources, Seydel asks (p. 84): "How does one conceive of the channels by which foreign elements could run into the solemnly fixed and scrupulously kept canon at Cashmere and Nepal in the first Christian centuries?" But this question can also be reversed. Oldenberg (Theol. Literaturzeitung, 1905, p. 66) strikingly remarks, that the borrowings of foreign elements can always only be estimated from the point of view of the eventually borrowing culture or literature, and comes to the conclusion: "The possibility that Buddhist elements penetrated into the circles in which the Gospels originated, must, as a matter of course, only be admitted *in abstract*. But when I consider how shadowy are the traces of Western learning concerning Buddha and Buddhism in the older times, I cannot find it very probable that the old Christian congregations should so quickly, as must be assumed, have snatched up so many of the legends."

In his lecture delivered before the International Congress of Arts and Sciences at

Saint Louis in 1904 on "The Investigation of the Old Indian Religions" (Dentrohe Rundsahan, November, 1905, p. 216), he says: "I dare to express it as my impression, that nothing in the four Gospels points with special probability to more than mere inner parallelism to Buddhism, not to a real borrowing from India. A prominent specialist in Indian literature (Pischel) not long ago said that "just as Babel is now boisterously knocking at the gates of the Old Testament, so Buddha knocks at present at the door of the New Testament. Indeed, much knocking one hears here and there who examines the later writings of old Christian literature. Even the dullest ear must hear it when in the mediæval Christian romance of Balaam and Josaphat, the entire infancy history of the royal son of the Sâkya house is found. But at the gates of the New Testament itself Buddha, as it seems to me, hardly knocks."

It is small compensation that when he deprives the biblical document of faithfulness and truth, Seydel (p. 301) repeatedly calls attention to the great apologetic value, which attaches itself to those parts of our Christian Gospels which are without analogy, for

example, the history of the passion, certain fundamental elements of the faith and life and individual traits of Jesus. In these we now have a solid kernel of historical actuality, immovably confirmed anew by these investigations.

It is therefore not sufficient to put the individual New Testament and Buddhist narratives side by side, but one must compare the spirit of both in order to arrive at a certain result as to the possibility of borrowing from Buddhist sources or, at least, of their influence upon the Gospels.

It is a glory of Buddhism that it first put the thought of redemption in the center of religion; but how different is that which the Buddhist and what the Christian understand by this word. What is that from which he wishes to be delivered? How does the redemption take place and whereby is it accomplished? The Buddhist wishes a deliverance from the suffering of existence; his desire is to be freed from birth, in whatever form it is, and finally to enter into Nirvana, into nothing. Redemption he accomplishes himself, in a purely intellectual way, through the knowledge of the folly which

has caused his existence, and through the complete resignation of every wish for existence. The Christian, too, hopes for deliverance from suffering, and prays for deliverance from evil; but he suffers more under the sin than under the suffering; from the former he wishes to be freed, freed from its punishment, freed from its power.

Buddhism has deeply felt the great law of causality. Not as if it denied freedom. Though it may lack the full notion of sin as guilt, yet it lacks not that of folly, by which man becomes disgusted with life; but it lacks one thing: belief in grace. Religion cannot get along without *this* word. But Buddhism knows nothing of "grace," but only of Karma. The inexorable law of causality shows that in its original form Buddhism is at least a philosophical conception of the world, that it has no comprehension of the deepest need of the human heart.

Buddhism is great in resignation and ability to suffer; but this resignation has its cause in the contempt of the body and of life in general. It is far removed from the resignation of the Christian, which has its cause

in the conviction that even the dark and heavy experiences come according to the will of God, and that in suffering is also a blessing.

Buddhism has seriously looked into the face of the vanity of earthly things and the distress of life. For it is its deepest conviction that the origin of the world is a great calamity; that the life of man, from his birth to his death, is only suffering, and that all longing of him who has come to knowledge can only consist in the desire to be finally relieved from the pain of any existence. Pessimism cannot be understood more thoroughly, more naturally. Yea, pessimism is so much the characteristic sign of Buddhism that some who incline to it hardly know anything more accurate of its teaching than this; and, whatever the causes, they only share in this pessimistic temper. Certainly, Christianity also has a deep insight into the sin and misery of the world. It is a conviction of biblical Christianity; the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." What is said of the natural man is said of the world; "the world lieth in

wickedness." With the lamentation, "O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" the apostle closes the statement of the painful struggle between the two powers in his heart and in his members; but immediately after that lamentation of recollection, he exclaims: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He only knows the one side of Christianity, its presupposition, who only knows the pessimistic trait in it; not, however, the other side, the joyous, world-overcoming, sense of victory.

Both religions have in common the belief in a life after death; but the Buddhist is afraid of it; the redeemed Christian looks for it. To the former nonexistence seems to be better than the happiest state; the latter has a "desire to depart, and to be with Christ forever." Buddhism by self-discipline and mercy has morally influenced Asiatic nations; but its ethics is essentially negative, a morality which enables its adherents to suffer and endure, but not to act and work. Buddhism believes in no God. The Christian has found in God his Father. In the face of such differences, should the

Christians of the early time have been accessible to Buddhist influences and made legends from the life of Buddha the model for the life of Christ? It is conceivable that the nominal Christians of our day, who are inwardly estranged from faith and yet have an indistinct religious craving, incline to the teachings of Buddhism, and adopt them, not because of its present degenerated form, but on account of its original, philosophical contemplation of the world; but it is hard to believe that Christians of the first centuries received Buddhist legends into the Gospel of Christ.

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